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CAIRO AND AMMAN FOR REFCOORDS, STATE FOR PRM

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SUBJECT: SUDANESE REFUGEES IN ANBAR ASK FOR RESETTLEMENT

REF: 2006 BAGHDAD 4465

¶1. (SBU) This is an action cable. See paragraph 6 for action.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Darfourian refugees camped in west Anbar continue to ask for third country resettlement. While UNHCR and MNF-I are still meeting most of the refugees' basic needs, morale is low after two years living in precarious security and under harsh weather conditions in the desert. UNHCR has referred the caseload to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). End Summary.

¶3. (U) On April 30, Embassy Refugee Coordinator (RefCoord) accompanied UNHCR for a visit to a group of 137 Darfourian refugees camped 47 miles east of the Iraqi-Jordanian border. The refugees left Baghdad and headed to Jordan in May of 2005, but Jordanian authorities denied them admissions into the country. They camped at the border itself until Iraqi patrols forced them out of the area in June of 2005. Rather than returning to Baghdad, the refugees relocated to their present location, where they have remained for the past two years.

¶4. (U) Refugee leaders confirmed RefCoord's assessment that the refugees' living conditions had not changed substantially since a joint UNHCR-Embassy Baghdad team visited them in November of 2006 (reftel). There are no medical facilities anywhere near the camp. Education for the approximately 40 children in the group is limited to two hours of non-formal instruction a day. UNHCR's implementing partner has built better latrines, but water and sanitation conditions are still below minimum standards in disaster response (a.k.a. Sphere standards): the latrines lack water access points nearby, and there are no shower or bathing areas. The refugees stated that their nutritional needs were being met, and were grateful for the periodic MNF-I supply of bottled water. Some of the tents were very worn down (Note: UNHCR committed to replace some of the tents as soon as possible. End note.)

¶5. (U) RefCoord noticed that the refugees' morale had fallen significantly since November. The refugee leaders complained to UNHCR about the lack of progress in finding a solution to their situation. Privately, one of the refugees mentioned that there had been two suicide attempts in the last six months, and that many suffered from depression. The refugees also expressed concern about their lack of security. The refugees' vulnerability in this volatile province was underscored last February, when the camp's water deposit was hit three times during a shoot-out between insurgents and Coalition Forces in the proximity of the camp.

¶6. (SBU) Action request: Embassy requests an update on the status of UNHCR's referral of the group to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Should the Department accept UNHCR's referral, Embassy encourages the Department to respond favorably to posts' reftel recommendation to pursue

the use of Camp Korean Village as a processing site for the
group.
CROCKER